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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2005

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE
THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL

PM Erdogan: Strategic Partnership Continues With US -
Milliyet
Erdogan Assures US: 'Different' Voices Won't Spoil Ties -
Hurriyet
Bush, Erdogan Hold Cordial Meeting - Sabah
FM Gul: No Crisis With US - Hurriyet
US-EU Melt Ice at NATO Summit - Aksam
NATO To Train Iraq Security Forces - Milliyet
Iraq mission For NATO - Turkiye
Europeans Do Not Believe in Bush - AP Poll - Aksam
US Should Not 'Export' Democracy - AP Poll - Sabah

OPINION MAKERS

Erdogan Promises Support For Iraq - Radikal
Bush Gets European Concessions on Iraq - Cumhuriyet
Bush: All Options on the Table with Iran - Yeni Safak
Bush Leaves Door Open to War on Iran, Syria - Cumhuriyet
World Doesn't Believe in US Democracy Mission -- Zaman
Shiite Alliance Agrees on Caferi - Zaman
Amnesty International: US Troops Abuse Iraqi Women - Zaman
Hersh Receives Polk Award For Abu-Ghraib Reporting - Radikal
Israel Pushes US to Attack Iran - Yeni Safak
Malcolm X Commemorated in US - Yeni Safak
Afghanistan Fails to Tackle Health, Unemployment, Education
- Radikal

BRIEFING

PM Erdogan-President Bush Meet in Brussels: PM Tayyip
Erdogan met President George Bush in Brussels Tuesday in a
bid to eliminate worries about the state of relations
between the two allies. In a press availability following
bilateral meetings with British PM Blair and several other
European leaders, Erdogan publicly denied recent reports
claiming strain in ties with the US. 'Such reports in the
press will not affect relations between the US and Turkey,'
he said. 'The press should put the emphasis on our
strategic partnership with the US,' Erdogan added.
Responding to a question, Erdogan said the issue of Syria
was not raised in his discussion with President Bush.
'Turkey is prepared to host Iraqi security forces for
training, and will give 100,000 Euros to the Iraq Trust
Fund,' the Turkish prime minister noted. All papers report
that Erdogan, Bush and Blair made small talk about Erdogan's
son, who is working in the United States. The media reports
that President Bush managed to secure the support of NATO on
technical assistance and training for Iraqi security forces.
Bush defended the war in Iraq, and urged European leaders
who opposed the decision to go to war to 'put that behind
us' and 'work with us.' 'We liberated Iraq, and that
decision has been made -- it's over with. Now it's time to
unify for the sake of peace,' Bush said at a joint press
conference with NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop
Scheffer.

FM Gul: 'No Crisis With the US': FM Abdullah Gul denied on
CNN-Turk Tuesday claims of a strain in US-Turkey ties as
'artificial and exaggerated.' 'Sometimes mutual interests
may be at odds,' Gul noted, 'but hostility is out of the
question.' He added that everything is going 'very well'
between the two countries. Gul also noted that the press
has 'misinterpreted' a recent speech by Douglas Feith, in
which the Undersecretary of Defense allegedly blamed the
Turkish leadership for rising anti-Americanism in Turkey.
'Feith's speech is not like it has been portrayed in the
press. In fact, I could have given the same speech,' Gul
said. Meanwhile, Turkish papers report State Department
Spokesman Richard Boucher's response to a question on the
state of US-Turkey ties. Boucher said that Turkey and the

US have 'broad cooperation' on the Middle East and Iraq, and noted that the US supports Turkey's future in Europe. Boucher added that the two countries enjoy a 'healthy and productive' relationship.

Nicosia on Turkish Cypriot Elections: Greek Cypriot politicians are unhappy with Mehmet Ali Talat's victory in last Sunday's general elections in north Cyprus, "Cumhuriyet" reports from Nicosia. Greek Cypriot government spokesman Hrisostomidis and parliament speaker Hristofyas said that a visit last week by a US trade delegation to the north boosted support for CTP leader Talat. Hrisostomidis said the US Embassy Commercial Counselor should not have joined the American business delegation visit to Turkish Cyprus. He claimed that 30,000 Turks from the Turkish mainland were settled in north Cyprus during Talat's first term. Hrisostomidis also said that all troops should be withdrawn from Cyprus.

House Calls For Direct UK Flights to North Cyprus: Britain's House of Commons Foreign Relations Committee urged the British government to begin direct flights to northern Cyprus, papers report. The Committee also called for increasing pressure on Nicosia for a solution to the division of the island. If the Cyprus issue remains unresolved, it will be practically impossible for Turkey to become a member of the European Union, the committee noted. The Committee also urged Turkey to withdraw some of its troops from Cyprus.

Cabinet Reshuffle Expected: Papers speculate that PM Erdogan may announce a cabinet reshuffle following a party group meeting on Thursday. "Aksam" claims that after the resignation of the former Culture and Tourism minister Erkan Mumcu, some AK Party lawmakers with Islamic roots are turning to veteran Islamist leader Necmettin Erbakan's Saadet Party (AP). Some new defectors from AKP may join SP if Numan Kurtulmus, a reformist, is elected chairman at the SP convention to be held in three months.

Turkey Offers Disaster Aid to Tehran: Turkey on Tuesday offered help to Tehran following the earthquake that hit southeast Iran, but the Iranian embassy in Ankara turned down the offer. The prime minister's office said that Turkish rescue and emergency teams were standing by if Iran changes its mind. The UN, the US and the UK have also offered help to Tehran, papers report.

EDITORIAL OPINION: Bush in Europe

"Bush in Europe"
Yilmaz Oztuna commented in the conservative "Turkiye" (2/23): "The Greater Middle East Initiative seems to be the main goal to achieve during President Bush's first trip to Europe after the start of his second term. President Bush hoped to create a forum for discussing with the European Union their mutual interest in this project. Bush's focus was France, as Chirac is likely to become president for a third term. Washington's relationship with Europe is doomed to suffer weakness unless French support is ensured for American initiatives. France will continue to be an immediate focus of diplomacy in Washington's agenda. It is very unlikely that France will stand completely against US policies. For instance, Chirac and Bush agreed to work together to ensure a Syrian pull out from Lebanon. Further consensus between the US and France can be expected. As for Turkey, creating anti-Americanism is not in Ankara's interest. It is amazing but true that certain officials in Ankara believe an Iranian-Syrian alliance supported by Turkey would be victorious in the event of a war initiated by the US."

"New Chapter in US-Europe Relations"
Sami Kohen opined in the mass appeal "Milliyet" (2/23): "President Bush is trying to change his former image and is talking about a new beginning in US relations with Europe. He is suggesting that both the US and Europe should focus on common values and mutual interests by setting past differences aside. His tone is soft and his rhetoric is flexible. It is too early to draw a conclusion as to whether this change is real or only rhetorical. President Bush managed to achieve some concrete results during his European tour. A climate of consensus on controversial issues was created not only because of the US, but also because of flexibility in the European approach. Bush and Chirac left aside former differences and ensured a consensus on the Syria-Lebanon issue. It was very important to see the involvement of NATO and the EU in training Iraqi security forces. For the first time, Europeans agreed to support the rebuilding of Iraq through two institutions, the EU and NATO. . It is also very important for Turkey that solidarity and cooperation be maintained between Europe and the US. Harmony between the two will have a positive effect on Turkish diplomacy."

